

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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-----015174 181110Z /13

P 180959Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8038
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 08952

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, KN, JA
SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS TAKE NORTH KOREAN LINE IN PYONGYANG

REF: TOKYO 08573

SUMMARY: JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) DELEGATION HEADED BY
CHAIRMAN ASUKATA RETURNED TO JAPAN MAY 17 AFTER FIVE-DAY
VISIT TO NORTH KOREA, DURING WHICH DELEGATION WENT OUT
OF ITS WAY TO APPEAR PRO-NORTH AND ANTI-ROK AND LEVELED
STRONG ATTACKS ON U.S. LATTER WERE ROUNDLY CONDEMNED
BY JAPANESE MEDIA. END SUMMARY.

1. ASUKATA GROUP'S SIX-DAY VISIT TO NORTH KOREA MAY 11-17
WAS JSP'S FIFTH. SCHEDULE INCLUDED LAVISH BANQUETS (MAY
11 AND 15), LENGTHY POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH DPRK VICE
PRESIDENT PAK SONG-CHOL (MAY 12), PRESIDENT KIM IL-SUNG
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(MAY 13), VISIT TO PAN MUN JOM (MAY 14) AND MASS RALLY
IN PYONGYANG (MAY 15).

2. STRONGLY WORDED COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BEFORE RETURN VIA
PEKING, LIKE ASUKATA'S TOASTS AT BANQUETS, HAS JSP CON-
DEMNING "SCHEMES" OF AMERICAN AND SOUTH KOREAN "REACTION-
ARY FORCES" TO PROVOKE WAR UNDER PRETEXT OF MAINTAINING

BALANCE OF POWER ON PENINSULA. IT DEMANDS WITHDRAWAL OF ALL U.S. FORCES AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND FURTHER CONDEMNS "U.S. IMPERIALISTS" FOR ATTEMPTING TO "FABRICATE TWO KOREAS INCLUDING ENTRY INTO U.N. AND CROSS-RECOGNITION." COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNS "PAK CHONG-HUI PUPPET CLIQUE'S FASCIST OPPRESSION", AS WELL AS GOJ FOR "ITS AVARICIOUS IMPERIALIST DOMINATION, EXPLOITATION AND PLUNDER OF SOUTH KOREA." IN CONTRAST TO COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN 1974, WHEN THEN JSP CHAIRMAN NARITA VISITED PYONGYANG, JOINT COMMUNIQUE MAKES NO MENTION OF NORMALIZATION OF JAPAN-DPRK RELATIONS, WHICH HAS LONG BEEN ONE OF JSP'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS GOALS.

3. IN RARE PRACTICAL REFERENCE, COMMUNIQUE ALSO HAS JSP EXPRESSING "DEEP GRATITUDE FOR WARM SOLICITUDE SHOWN BY GREAT LEADER KIM IL-SONG FOR EXTENSION OF EXISTING PROVISIONAL FISHERIES AGREEMENT." AGREEMENT IS PRIVATE MEASURE, DUE TO EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, WHICH ALLOWS JAPANESE TO FISH WITHIN DPRK ECONOMIC (BUT NON-MILITARY) ZONE. (EXTENSION OF AGREEMENT WILL REPORTEDLY BE SETTLED WHEN ALL-PARTY GROUP OF DIETMEN BELONGING TO JAPAN-NORTH KOREA PARLIAMENTARIANS' LEAGUE VISITS PYONGYANG IN JUNE.) ASUKATA SPENT MUCH OF HIS MAY 17 RETURN PRESS CONFERENCE ON FISHERIES AGREEMENT, SAYING THAT OBTAINING IT MEANT TRIP HAD BEEN "TO CERTAIN EXTENT, SUCCESS." EMBASSY'S MOFA CONTACTS WERE NOT SURPRISED BY DPRK'S WILLINGNESS TO EXTEND AGREEMENT, WHICH THEY SEEMAINLY AS CONTINUATION OF STATUS

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QUO DEMONSTRATING NEITHER MORE NOR LESS FLEXIBILITY IN DPRK'S ATTITUDE TOWARD JAPAN. MOREOVER, IT PUTS OFF GIVING FISHERIES AGREEMENT PERMANENT STATUS IT WILL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO HAVE.

4. EDITORIAL REACTION TO ASUKATA'S VISIT HAS BEEN WHOLLY NEGATIVE. ALL MAJOR PAPERS WERE TAKEN ABACK BY STRONG WORDING IN COMMUNIQUE, DISAGREED WITH COMMUNIQUE'S DEMAND FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM SOUTH KOREA, WHICH TWO PAPERS TERMED IRRESPONDIBLE, AND WERE DISAPPOINTED BY APPARENTLY POOR CHANCES FOR NORMALIZATION WITH DPRK. PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY WAS EDITORIAL BY ASAHI SHIMBUN, USUALLY FRIENDLY TOJSP, WHICH SAID THAT IF SOCIALISTS CONTINUED TO BE SO PRO-NORTH AND ANTI-SOUTH AT TIME WHEN OTHERS WERE HOPING TO EASE TENSIONS BY PROMOTING NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, JSP WOULD BE BOXING ITSELF IN.

5. COMMENT: PARTLY AS CONSEQUENCE OF JSP'S LONG-STANDING LINKS WITH DPRK-AFFILIATED CHOSEN SOREN, HIGHLY PRO-NORTH KOREAN STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN COMMON FOR JSP LEADERS IN PAST. IT HAD BEEN SUPPOSED, HOWEVER, THAT ASUKATA, FAMED FOR HIS PRAGMATISM AS MAYOR OF YOKOHAMA,

MIGHT DEPART FROM OLD PRACTICES WHEN HE BECAME PARTY CHAIRMAN. AS TOKYO A-101 POINTS OUT, HOWEVER, ASUKATA IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO ANTI-MILITARIST, ANTI-U.S. BASES, ANTI-U.S.-JAPAN MST THEMES, JSP'S OLDEST AND MOST IMPORTANT IDEOLOGICAL PROPS. IN THAT CONTEXT, HIS CONDEMNATIONS OF U.S. AND ROK GOVERNMENTS WERE NOT DEPARTURES FROM HIS PREVIOUS RECORD. FURTHER, HIS FOLLOWING OF DPRK'S LEAD ON CONDEMNATORY LANGUAGE OF BOTH COMMUNIQUE AND TOASTS MIGHT ALSO HAVE BEEN PRICE ASUKATA HAD TO PAY FOR GETTING LIMITED SUPPORT ON EXTENSION

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 08952

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

OF FISHERIES AGREEMENT.

6. BE THAT AS IT MAY, ASUKATA'S LAVISHLY PRO-NORTH STATEMENTS, HAVE MADE JSP APPEAR COMPLETELY OUT OF STEP WITH MAINSTREAM OF JAPANESE PUBLIC OPINION. (HIS PRONOUNCEMENTS NOSTALGICALLY CALL TO MIND THE PEKING VISIT ALMOST TWENTY YEARS AGO OF ASUKATA'S PREDECESSOR, ASANUMA, WHO IN SUBSCRIBING TO THE LINE "AMERICAN IMPERIALISM IS THE COMMON ENEMY OF CHINA AND JAPAN," ALIENATED MUCH OF HIS OWN ENTOURAGE, LET ALONE POTENTIAL SUPPORTERS.) NOT ONLY MEDIA BUT ALSO JSP'S MODERATE, CENTRIST PARTY RIVALS IN OPPOSITION, WHICH HAVE BRANDED JSP'S LEFTIST STANCES AS IRRESPONSIBLE, WILL HOLD

NORTH KOREAN TRIP UP AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF SOCIALIST
EXTREMISM. MORE IMPORTANTLY, JAPAN'S GROWING BODY OF
UNCOMMITTED VOTERS MIGHT WELL TAKE IT AS FURTHER EVIDENCE
THAT JSP'S POLICIES -- AND ASUKATA PERSONALLY -- ARE
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